

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SAM-01 SAB-01 DRC-01

/079 W

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O 081432Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2384

INFO USINT DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2597

DAMASCUS ALSO FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: TEL AVIV 2573

1. FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING OVER THE PAST TWO DAYS RE EFFORTS TO FORM NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SINCE OUR STATUS REPORT ON THIS FLUID SITUATION CONTAINED IN REFTEL.

2. AS EXPECTED, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) ANNOUNCED MAY 6 THAT "CONDITIONS HAVE NOT BEEN CREATED" ENABLING IT TO JOIN RABIN GOVERNMENT. BOTH NRP AND LABOR NEGOTIATORS IMMEDIATELY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT REGARD THIS AS A FINAL POSITION AND THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES WOULD CONTINUE.

3. ONE OF RABIN'S CLOSE ASSOCIATES TODAY HAS CONFIRMED TO
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US, AS WE HAD SUSPECTED, THAT RABIN'S PERSONAL PREFERENCE IS FOR

FORMING 61-MEMBER GOVERNMENT (OMITTING NRP). ALTHOUGH RABIN LATELY HAS BEEN MAINTAINING VERY LOW PUBLIC PROFILE, WE ASSUME HE HAS BEEN WORKING BEHIND SCENES TO GET SUPPORT FOR HIS PREFERENCE. NEVERTHELESS, OPPOSITION WITHIN LABOR PARTY TO IDEA OF FORMING GOVERNMENT WITHOUT NRP EVIDENTLY HAS BEEN GROWING IN PAST COUPLE OF DAYS, PROBABLY REINFORCED IN LARGE MEASURE BY SAPIR'S ATTITUDE.

4. SAPIR, UPON RETURNING FROM EUROPE MAY 6, HAS PLACED HIMSELF IN VANGUARD OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE TRYING TO FORM GOVERNMENT WITH ONLY INDEPENDENT LIBERALS (ILP) AND CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT (CRM). SAPIR ARGUED AT MAY 7 LABOR ALIGNMENT NEGOTIATORS' MEETING THAT FORMATION OF 61-MEMBER GOVERNMENT WAS UNREALISTIC AND DANGEROUS, SINCE A NUMBER OF LABOR PARTY KNESSET MEMBERS WOULD NOT SUPPORT IT--AND ALLUSION TO PART OF RAFI AND PART OF MAPAI OLD GUARD. SAPIR MAINTAINED THAT LABOR PARTY HAS ONLY TWO CHOICES: FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT INCLUDING NRP OF CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT.

5. AS OF NOW LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE REMAINS SCHEDULED TO CONVENE MAY 12, AND BEFORE THEN NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT, IF ANY, IT WILL TRY TO FORM. THEY WILL FIRST MAKE ADDITIONAL EFFORT TO FIND COMPROMISE FORMULA WITH NRP AND, IN LIKELY EVENT THAT THIS ATTEMPT FAILS, MAKE DECISION WHETHER TO INVITE ILP AND CRM TO JOIN GOVERNMENT. NEGOTIATORS MAY ALSO TAKE FRESH LOOK AT POSSIBILITY OF MINORITY GOVERNMENT, EITHER ALONE OR WITH ILP, BUT NEITHER OF THESE COURSES APPEARS PROMISING.

6. COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN IN PAST TWO DAYS ARE NOW RELUCTANT TO VENTURE EVEN A GUESS ON OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS, SINCE THEY BELIEVE THAT WITHIN LABOR PARTY ITSELF PREFERENCE AS TO COURSE OF ACTION HAS NOT YET CRYSTALLIZED. IMPORTANT ELEMENT REMAINS DETERMINATION OF LABOR PARTY OLD GUARD TO CONTINUE WITH CARETAKER GOVERNMENT UNDER MRS MEIR'S LEADERSHIP UNTIL NEW ELECTION. THERE IS ALSO CONSIDERABLE LABOR PARTY RELUCTANCE TO MAKE A FINAL BREAK WITH NRP, PARTLY OUT OF CONCERN THAT THIS MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO FORMATION OF STRONG OPPOSITION BLOC OF LIKUD AND RELIGIOUS PARTIES WITH DANGEROUS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUTCOME OF NEXT ELECTION.

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